CREATING LINKS

[MUSIC]

Links pretty much what makes the web what it is.

In this lecture, we're going to take a look at different types of links and

how you could create them in your HTML page.

So the first type of links that we're going to take a look at

are internal links.

Here I am looking at the file called links-internal.html,

and it's located in the examples/Lecture09 folder.

And here we have a couple of links we're going to take a look at.

Now the way you create links is by specifying an a element

with an attribute href.

And href stands for hypertext reference.

The value of href can either be a relative or an absolute URL.

In our case here, since we're discussing internal links

which are links that point to internal web pages of the where application,

the links we're showing are all relative URL links.

However we could still have an even absolute URL links as long as they point,

again, to the same web application that we're in.

Since we're providing no directory information,

the browser will assume that same-directory.html is a file that lives

in the same directory as links-internal.html.

It's also a very good idea to always specify a title attribute for the a tag.

The title attribute is used by the screen readers

that help the visually impaired people get through the web page.

The content in between the opening and closing a tags is the content

you're going to see in the web page, when it is served and on which you're going to

be able to click to go to the href that the a tag is configured with.

Note the second example of our a tag.

In this example, we're surrounding a div tag with our anchor tag.

In other words, this div tag is going to be

the content over our link on which were going to be able to click.

Let's go ahead and see what this look like in the browser?

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Okay. So, here is our internal links page, and

we have a couple of links.

One it says linking to a file in the same directory, and the one is the DIV.

That's the a tag surrounding the div tag that says DIV linking

to a file in the same directory.

And if we click that, we're going to go to this same-directory.html

page which basically just provides a link back to our original page.

What's interesting to note here is that the first link,

linking to a file in the same directory,

is clearly an inline tag since it's not forcing itself to go to a new line.

But yet in the second case, div linking to a file in the same directory,

we're surrounding the div tag with our a tag.

So what's going on here?

Are we using block level element, the div, inside an inline element?

Well, turns out things are little bit more interesting.

Let's take a look at the a tag as defined in the W3C specification.

If you take a look closely, the a tag is both a flow content and

a phrasing content.

In other words, to map it back to the HTML four days, the a tag in

the HTML5 is both an inline element and a block level element at the same time.

And this is what allows us to take the a tag and surround a div tag inside of it.

The authors of the HTML5 specification realized that there are a lot of

times where you would like to be able to click on a whole region.

And a most common occurrence of that is on when you have a logo or

some sort of a company name in the top left corner for example, of your webpage.

People expect to be able to click on that and

be able to go to the front page of the company.

Prior to HTML5, people had to use all kinds of tricks

in order to achieve that effect because the a tag was only an inline tag, and

you weren't really able to wrap the a tag around the div tag.

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Next, let's take a look at an example of an external link.

Here we are in Sublime Text again and looking at the file called

links-external.html which is again located in the examples/ Lecture09 folder.

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And this document basically contains just a single link.

There's really nothing super special about external links other that their href value

usually starts with http:// because it's usually the case

that external links are hosted on a different domain name than your website.

However, there's one feature of the a element that I would like to demonstrate

that is quite often used in conjunction with external links.

And that is the target attribute.

Target attribute, when it's set to the value \_blank,

forces the browser to open this page in a new tab or a new window.

The reason that's advantageous is because nowadays unfortunately people have a very

short attention span, and if you take them from your website to a different website,

it is a very good chance that they will never come back to your site.

And usually you don't want them to leave your site completely.

So target="\_blank" is very useful in that regard.

Let's a take a look at this page in the browser.

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And here's the page in the browser.

And if we click this link, Coursera Facebook Page, it will open a new tab and

will load the Facebook page pointed to by that link.

Coincidentally, this is a Facebook page I created for the two courses I'm teaching

on Coursera which is at facebook.com/CourseraWebDev.

So please like this page, and follow it as I'll be posting some optional but

interesting and relevant material.

Another type of link that is extremely important to know about

is a fragment identifier.

So here I'm in again in Sublime Text in links-same-page.html.

That is located in examples/Lecture09 folder.

And as you could see, the links that have set up here

all have a very specific format in the href attribute.

It's a # followed by some name like section1, section2, and so on.

Now what these links are pointing to is a section of our page.

Now you could identify a section a couple of different ways.

You can have in any tag that has an id with that section name.

Notice that the section name does not contain the # sign.

Only the link to that section contains the # sign.

That's one way to identify a section within the page.

Another way is, if we scroll down all the way to the bottom of the page,

is to create an anchor tag with a name attribute and

name the section very similarly to the way you name a section id.

The way you refer to these sections is exactly the same,

you put a # in front of the name of the section and

stick that value in the href attribute of an anchor tag.

So let's take a look at this document in the browser.

And here's the document.

As you can see, we have six different links.

And if we click on any one of these links,

it will take us to the section of the page that is marked with that particular id.

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If we scroll all the way down, we even have a back to the top link

which basically points to all the way to the top.

Now, the top is right here, and if you look at the code and

scroll all the way up, we have an h1 tag that has an id

with top which allows us to scroll all the way to the bottom of the page,

see that link, and jump right back to the top.

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What's really neat about fragment identifiers is if you click on one and

you have them in URL, you could copy and paste this URL and

send it to a friend as a bookmark.

And when they paste it into their browser, they will be taken to this page and

jump straight to the section that was pointed to by the fragment identifier.

Now I am on my local hard drive, and I'm not on a server so obviously sending

this link that points to my local hard drive is not going to do any good.

But if we're on a server, this link with the section identifier would have taken

anybody anywhere, with a connection to the internet, to the proper page and

to the proper section of that page.

While fragment identifiers are very useful in order to jump to different parts of

the same page, recently they have become even more important as they're used for

navigation within the SPA or Single Page Applications.

And SPA, Single Page Applications have become extremely popular.

So knowing how fragment identifiers work is an important step towards

being able to code single page applications.